

## Make a move to improve your bone strength

Gail Yates has plenty of proof that weight-bearing exercise can help strengthen bones. When a bone density test several years ago showed she had osteopenia, a pre-osteoporosis condition, she started attending Enhance®Fitness, one of Kaiser Permanente's exercise programs for older adults.

**"I go to classes 2 or 3 times a week, and the instructor says several of the exercises we do stimulate bone strength,"** she says. "When I had another bone density test a year after the first one, it showed that I'd experienced bone growth in key areas, most notably my hips. My bones had gotten stronger and my risk of breaking a bone had gone down." Yates also enjoys taking walks and hikes to get out in nature. She even braved a steep and narrow spiral staircase recently – and a tiny ladder – to reach the top of a lighthouse in Maine.

Osteoporosis, or weak bones, is often called a silent disease because it can go unnoticed until you take a fall and fracture a bone. It's common in older adults, both women and men. But, as Yates happily discovered, there are ways to turn bone loss around.

- **Stay active.** Weight-bearing exercise like walking briskly, hiking, climbing stairs, dancing, yoga, tai chi, and playing racquet sports will help prevent osteoporosis and improve your balance. Using resistance bands, weight machines, or free weights are great ways to strengthen your muscles.

- **Eat foods rich in calcium and vitamin D.** Both nutrients are needed to keep your bones strong and healthy as you age. Good sources include salmon and shrimp, low-fat or nonfat dairy products, fortified beverages and cereals, eggs, beans, and dark green vegetables like broccoli and spinach. If you're not sure you're getting enough calcium or vitamin D in your diet, talk to your doctor.
- **Limit alcohol, soda, and caffeine.** They can all increase bone loss.
- **Watch your weight – and your height.** Maintaining a healthy weight is important, but weight loss and bone loss can sometimes go hand in hand. If you want to lose weight, talk to your doctor about a healthy approach. Also, if you think you've lost height, measure yourself. If you're shorter by 1.5 inches or more, tell your doctor. It can be a sign of osteoporosis.
- **Ask your doctor if you need a bone density test.** The test is recommended for women over 65 and men and women of any age who have fractured a bone. ■

**"When I had another bone density test a year after the first one, it showed that I'd experienced bone growth in key areas, most notably my hips."**



*Gail Yates found her bone strength improved after she started doing weight-bearing exercises.*

### Exercise options for building your bones

Kaiser Permanente Medicare Advantage members have access to 2 exercise programs designed for older adults – at no additional cost.

**Silver&Fit®\*** provides access to a fitness center, group exercise classes, a home fitness program, and other tools. You can enroll online by following these steps:  
**1.** Go to [silverandfit.com](https://silverandfit.com). **2.** Select **Find a Fitness Center** to view a facility near you.  
**3.** Click **Register** to sign up. To enroll by phone, call the Silver&Fit® Customer Service line for Kaiser Permanente Medicare Advantage (HMO) members at **1-877-750-2746 (TTY 711)**, Monday through Friday, 5 a.m. to 6 p.m.

**Enhance®Fitness** offers one-hour fitness classes at a number of locations in the Pacific Northwest. If you're unable to stand, you are welcome to sit while exercising. For more information, visit [kp.org/wa/classes](https://kp.org/wa/classes), email the Resource Line at [kpwa.resource-l@kp.org](mailto:kpwa.resource-l@kp.org), or call **206-326-2800** or **1-800-992-2279**.

\*The Silver&Fit® program is a federally registered trademark of American Specialty Health, Inc.